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October 27, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary
✓ The Under Secretary
G - The Deputy Under Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

SUBJECT: Cuba: Recommendation for POL Blockade

Attached is a memorandum advocating escalation of the quarantine to include POL which represents the consensus of the Planning Sub-Committee of the Executive Committee of the NSC and which has been cleared with Mr. Martin (ARA). The problem of timing is left open but my thought is that we should think in terms of next Tuesday or Wednesday at the latest, unless there is some decisive break in the diplomatic track.

I would underline one new thought in the memorandum: a POL quarantine is not an alternative to a strike on missile bases. It is a symbol of dead seriousness which, unlike the strike, is reversible. A strike can always follow if the rate of build-up or other factors appear to justify it.

W. W. Rostow

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED by W. W. Rostow

DATE 2/16/88

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RATIONALE AND OPERATIONS SCENARIO FOR
EXTENDING CUBAN QUARANTINE TO POL

(Note: POL-hour is time of Secretary of Defense's public announcement of escalation of the quarantine)

I. RATIONALE FOR ACTION.

Escalating the quarantine beyond missile fuel to include all POL holds these advantages:

A. Maximizes Soviet-Cuban frictions engendered by Khrushchev's offer to withdraw offensive weapons from Cuba in exchange for NATO missiles in Turkey. (We would thus increase pressure on Cuba and expose Soviet reluctance to assist/defend Cuba while we hold firm on our commitments to Turkey and negotiate in New York.)

B. Adds an important bargaining blue-chip to our position in New York.

C. Clearly signals that we are making an additional power play to displace the Soviets in Cuba and induce Soviet-Cuban compliance with the President's demands of October 22.

D. Though derivative of our main purpose (dismantling and withdrawal of Soviet missiles and sites), a POL blockade strikes at Cuban jugular, will weaken Castro internally, and will exacerbate differences between the governing factions (i.e., those primarily pro-Castro and those primarily pro-Soviet.)

E. Points the quarantine against the total Soviet-Cuban offensive position in Cuba, which depends on POL for mobility, deployment and use.

F. Represents attractive alternative to achieve our immediate objective in Cuba by methods short of an air-strike/

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invasion and without risking major Soviet reaction or breakdown of New York talks. (A POL-blockade is a powerful act which, however, is reversible. A strike, which is consistent with the POL-blockade, at a later point, is irreversible.)

There are no countervailing disadvantages. Problems with allies and countries whose ships are under charter to the USSR can be minimized by consultation and a stipulation to underwrite losses. Escalation of the blockade to POL can credibly be presented to world opinion as a measured increase of pressure to accomplish previously announced and supported objectives. The political-psychological problems within the NATO-OAS alliances should therefore be manageable.

II PROPOSED APPROACH.

A. Play the escalation in low-key through announcement by the Secretary of Defense under existing authority, as the extension to missile fuel was done. (This avoids unnecessary provocation, at a time when the New York talks are underway, without cushioning the power or purpose of the move.)

B. Advise Friendly nations, especially NATO and OAS allies at least 12 hours in advance. (This could be done by giving a 12-hour grace period under the announcement.)

C. Couple notification and announcement with an offer to underwrite losses (see below).

D. Reactivate the approach to Castro through Brazil 12 hours before POL-hour.

E. In the public rationale, play down the move as one directed at Castro; maintain the emphasis on Soviet offensive capabilities in Cuba, and the unfortunate victimization of Cuba thereby; and present the escalation as directed at the entirety of the Soviet offensive capability rather than only to IL-28's or MIG's. (Our purpose should be to keep world opinion focused on offensive missiles in line with the President's speech, rather than to broaden the debate to operational aircraft, which might be extended to our global deployments of aircraft.

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III SCENARIO OF OPERATIONS

A. POL minus 24 hours: DOD states work continuing on the missile sites and that most IL-28's are operational or near operational.

B. POL minus 24 hours: Ambassador Gordon notified to take necessary preparations for delivery of message to Castro at POL minus 12 hours.

C. POL minus 12 hours: Notify and explain to NAC*

D. POL minus 1 hour:

1. President notifies Khrushchev of escalation and informs him all tankers carrying POL will be turned back after a 12-hour grace period (POL-hour plus 12).

2. Notify and explain to Organ of Consultation (OAS) and friendly nations whose ships are under charter to USSR*.

3. Ambassador Stevenson similarly informs L. Inaur and presents US rationale.

4. Chief of Naval operations issues appropriate instructions.

F. POL hour

* Consultation will include a US offer that we are prepared to enter immediate discussions regarding problems which non-Soviet shippers may have with respect to financial contractual responsibilities or product disposition as a result of their inability to deliver petroleum cargoes already on the high seas. (This offer might extend to ships of satellite nations but presumably should not include Soviet tankers if the escalation is ordered during the New York talks.)

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E. POL-hour.

1. DOD issues low-key announcement that POL has been included in quarantine effective after 12-hour grace period.

2. All available US radio media inform Cuban people of escalation and promise that upon removal of the offensive weapons from Cuba, the US will undertake prompt action to permit rapid shipments of POL to Cuba.

3. Department of State issues public announcement of prior consultation with allies and friendly countries whose traffic to Cuba is involved and publicizes US offer to discuss or underwrite losses.

F. POL plus 12: POL-embargo becomes effective.

Clearances: ARA - Mr. Martin
 S/P - Mr. Rostow

ARA:RHurwitch
S/P:HCRamsey:mda
10/27/62

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